

Message Text

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R 030800Z APR 75

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4425

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 3507

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SCUL, CH

SUBJECT: PRC STATEMENT ON POSTPONEMENT OF PERFORMING ARTS TROUPE

REF: A) STATE 70063; B) STATE 68887

SUMMARY: NCNA APRIL 2 CARRIED ITS REPORTER'S INTERVIEW WITH FONMIN AND CHINESE PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION FOR FRIENDSHIP WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES (CPAFFC) SPOKESMEN ON THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE CHINESE PERFORMING ARTS TROUPE. THE REPORT FOLLOWED CLOSELY THE ORIGINAL PRCLO RESPONSE (REF. B). ON BALANCE, WE WOULD CONSIDER THIS PRC RESPONSE TO BE KEYED TO THE USG TREATMENT OF THE POSTPONEMENT AND ABOUT AS LOW-KEY AS COULD BE ANTICIPATED. END SUMMARY.

1. NCNA APRIL 2 CARRIED ITS REPORTER'S INTERVIEW WITH FONMIN AND CPAFFC SPOKESMEN IN PEKING ON POSTPONEMENT OF THE PRC TROUPE'S SCHEDULED VISIT TO THE U.S. THE REPORT OPENED WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THE TROUPE'S PLANNED U.S. TOUR, THE FACT THAT THE "AMERICAN PEOPLE WERE LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS PERFORMANCE," AND THAT THE "U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT UNREASONABLY DEMANDED" REMOVAL OF THE TAIWAN LIBERATION SONG, CONFIDENTIAL

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AN ACTION THAT WAS "ENTIRELY GROUNDLESS." THE SECOND PARA-

GRAPH IS ESSENTIALLY THE SAME AS PRCLO'S ORIGINAL RESPONSE TO THE US NATIONAL COMMITTEE (REF. B, PARA 4). THE CLOSING PARAGRAPH CLAIMS THE PRC "ABIDES BY THE PRINCIPLES OF THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE," CULTURAL EXCHANGE IS "IN CONFORMITY WITH THE COMMON DESIRE OF THE TWO PEOPLES," AND THE CHINESE WILL "NEVER BARTER AWAY PRINCIPLES."

2. COMMENT: THE FORMAT OF THE STATEMENT (AN NCNA REPORTER "INTERVIEW" WITH FONMIN AND CPAFFC SPOKESMEN) IS A MOST UNUSUAL ONE FOR THE CHINESE. THEY APPARENTLY SOUGHT TO DESIGN A RESPONSE THAT WOULD MATCH THE U.S. TREATMENT OF THE POSTPONEMENT IN WHICH THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE AND THE DEPARTMENT PROVIDED STATEMENTS TO REPORTERS. THIS CHINESE FORMAT IS THUS SIGNIFICANTLY LESS OFFICIAL THAN A FORMALLY RELEASED PRC FONMIN STATEMENT WOULD HAVE BEEN.

3. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE STATEMENT IS MERELY AN EXPANSION OF THE ORIGINAL PRCLO RESPONSE TO THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE WHICH, AS INDICATED BY THE DEPARTMENT (REF. B), CONTAINS NO THREAT OF RETALIATION. THE STRONGEST STATEMENTS INCLUDED IN THE NCNA PIECE ARE THAT THE "U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT UNREASONABLY DEMANDED" THE EXCLUSION OF THE SONG AND THAT THE U.S. POSITION "CONTRAVENED THE SPIRIT OF THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE."

4. THE STATEMENT STRESSES HEAVILY THE PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE ASPECT OF THE CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM AND SPEAKS OF THE PRC'S "ACTIVE SUPPORT" FOR IT. THIS SUGGESTS THAT THE CHINESE ARE PREPARED TO CONTINUE THE EXCHANGE PROGRAM SO LONG AS THEIR "PRINCIPLES" ARE NOT "COMPROMISED" AND THAT IN THEIR VIEW, THE PROGRAM REMAINS A USEFUL PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE EXERCISE.

5. ON BALANCE, THE NCNA PIECE WOULD APPEAR TO BE ABOUT AS LOW-KEY A RESPONSE AS COULD HAVE BEEN ANTICIPATED AND WAS DEvised TO BE AT AN APPROXIMATE LEVEL OF THE U.S. TREATMENT OF THE POSTPONEMENT.

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